DISCOURSE

OF THE

General Rule

OF

Faith and *Practice*,

AND

Judge of Controversie.

Greatly importing all those who desire to take Right Measures of Faith, and to Determine (at least to themselves) the numerous *Controversies* now on foot in the World.

By W. Penn.

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OF THE General Rule OF *Faith* and *Practice*.

SInce there are so many *Faiths* in the World, and perplext Controversies about them; and that it greatly behoveth every Man, if to Contend for, then first to Know the *True Faith* that overcometh the World; it may not be unnecessary to say something of the *General Rule of Faith and Life, and Judge of Controversie*, at this time. And indeed I am prest from this weighty Consideration, that Men perish for want of it, and can no more arrive at Truth without it, than the distressed Marriner can gain his Port who Sails without either Star or Compass.

I shall begin with an Explanation of the Terms, *Rule*, and *Faith*, of which we shall first treat, that we may as well express what we intend by the one, as what we mean by the other, which will be a proper Introduction to the whole Discourse.

By *General Rule*, &c. we understand, that *Constant Measure or Standard, by which Men in all Ages have been enabled to Judge of the Truth or Error of Doctrines, and the Good or Evil of Thoughts, Words and Actions.*

By *Faith* we underſtand an *Aſſent of the Mind, in ſuch manner to the Diſcoveries made of God thereto, as to reſign up to God, and have Dependence upon him, as the Great Creator and Saviour of his People*; which is inſeparable from good Works.

That Men, in all Ages, have had a Belief of God, and ſome Knowledge of him, tho' not upon equal Diſcovery, muſt be granted from that account that all Story gives of Mankind in matters of Religion; ſeveral have fully performed this: Of old, *Juſtin Martyr*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Auguſtine*, and others; of latter times, *Du Pleſſy*, *Grotius*, *Amiraldus*, *L. Herbert*, and above all Dr. *Cudworth*: And indeed the relicks we have of the moſt ancient Hiſtorians and Authors, are a Demonſtration in the Point. Now the Scripture tells us, that no Man knows the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son reveals him: And as none knows the things of Man, ſave the Spirit of Man; ſo the things of God knows no Man, but the Spirit of God. Hence we may ſafely conclude, that the Creating Word that was with God, and was God, in whom was Life, and that Life the *Light of Men*, and who is the Quickning Spirit, was *He*, by whom God in all Ages hath revealed Himſelf; conſequently, that Light or Spirit muſt have been the *General Rule* of Mens Knowledge, Faith and Obedience, with reſpect to God. And thus much *Pythagoras*, who liv'd about Six Hundred Years before thoſe Words were ſpoke or writ, laid down for a Maxim,

Mat. 11. 7.
1 Cor. 2. 1.

Maxim, *viz.* That no Man can know what is agreeable to God, *except a Man hear God himself*, and that must be within; for that was his Doctrine. To which the Apostle and Prophet thus agree: 1. In that *whatever makes manifest is Light.* 2. That *whatever might be known of God was made manifest within*; for God (who is Light, 1 *John* 1.5.) *had shewn it unto them*: And, *God hath shewn unto thee, O Man, what is good, and what God requireth of thee*, &c. which could not be without the Light of his Son shines in Man's Conscience; Therefore the *Light* of Christ in the Conscience must needs have been the *General Rule*, &c. It was by this Law that *Enoch*, *Noah*, *Abraham*, *Melchizedeck*, *Abimilech*, *Job*, *Jethro*, &c. walked and were accepted, as saith *Irenæus* and *Tertullian*; *They were Just by the Law written in their Hearts*: Then was it *their Rule* to, and in that just State.

Eph. 5.1
Rom. 1.1
Mic. 58
Iren. l. 2. 30. Tert. con. Jud. 184.

Obj. *It seems then you deny the Scripture to be the General Rule*, &c.

Answ. How can they be the *General Rule*, that have not been *General*? That which was both before, and since they were in being, must needs be *More General* than they: But that was this *Light* in the Conscience, the Law and Guide of those *Patriarchs* (for the Scriptures began long after, in the time of *Moses*) consequently that must be the General Rule, *&c.*

Quaker a new Ni name for *Christian* P. 54. 55. Invalid. *J. F's* Vi p. 69, 70, Reas. aga Rail. p. 40.

Obj. *But granting that the* Light within *were so before Scripture was extant, yet since the Writings of holy Scripture, the* Scripture, *and not the Light, hath been the* General Rule.

Answ. That cannot be, unless *Palestina* or *Canaan*, a little Province of *Asia*, was the whole World, and that the Jews, a particular People, were All Mankind. For at what time those Writings were among the Jews, other Nations were only left to the Law and *Light within*; this the Apostle confirmeth in that
Rom. 2. 14, 15. Passage, *For the* Gentiles, *which have not the Law* (that is, the outward Law, or Law written upon Stone) *do by Nature the things contained in the Law, which sheweth the Work of the Law written in their Hearts.* And the Gentiles themselves called it, the *Immutable Law*, the *Everlasting Foundation of Vertue*; *no Lively Precepts, but Immortal*; *a Sacred Good, God the Overseer*; the *Living Rule*, the *Root of the Soul*; that which makes the Good Man. Thus *Thales, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Plotin, Hieron, Philo, Plutarch*, as cited. And saith Sophocles, *God grant that I may always observe that venerable Sanctity in my Words and Deeds which these Noble Precepts* (writ in Man's Heart) *require: God is their Father, neither shall they ever be Abrogated; for there is in them a* Great God *that never waxeth Old.* More reverent Epithetes than our Opposers can afford, as their Books but too openly witness; yet would go for *Christian-Men*, tho' manifestly short of *Heathens*.

Thus

Thus is it evident that the Scripture was the *General Rule*, after it was given forth.

Obj. *But hath it not been ſince, and is it not the General Rule*, &c?

Anſw. There hath been ſince, and is now ſame Impediment; for before Chriſt's ing in the Fleſh and ſince, where the ptures never reach'd, there hath been the e Light: And though Nations, by not rifying God as God, when they have wn him, have been given up to all man- of Impieties, inſomuch as their Under- dings have been greatly vail'd; yet did the *Light within* ſo entirely loſe its Ru- Exerciſe among them, as that they lived hout any Senſe of ſuch a thing: Therefore the *Scriptures* have not been, neither are *General Rule*; no not ſo much as of any ; ſince in no Age can it be prov'd that whole, or greateſt part of the World them. But had they been ſo for ſome or two Ages, as they never were; yet granting it will not reach our Queſtion, ere the Word *General* implieth the Na- e of the Thing it ſelf, reſpecting Man- d from the Beginning of the World to s Day, and ſo to the End.

Obj. *But is not the Scripture the Rule*, &c. *our Day?*

Anſw. If *The Rule*, then *The General Rule*: whatſoever is *The Rule* of Faith and Life, excludeth

excludeth all other from being *General*, being but particular in respect of it. Therefore not *The*, though *A Rule* of Faith and Life.

But besides their not being *General*, I have several Reasons to offer, why they cannot be *The Rule* of Faith and Life, &c.

1. If now the Rule, then ever the Rule. But they were not ever the Rule; and therefore they cannot be the Rule. That they were not ever the Rule is granted: But they are not the now the Rule may by some denied; which I shall prove that the Faith of God's People in all Ages of *One Nature*, is the Rule but of Nature: But clear is, *Heb.* 11. The Faith has been but of Nature; Consequently the Rule but of Nature. In short, the holy Ancients Faith before they or wrote Scripture they had a Rule fore they had or Scripture; for Faith is, there

Justin Martyr saith, 'That 'all are *Christians* who live 'with Christ, as *Abraham* 'and *Elias*; and amongst the 'Greeks, as *Socrates*, *Hera-*'*clitus*, &c. See *Scultetus* on him, who also saith, That some at this day are of his Judgment, who have taught that '*Melchizedek*, *Abimelech*, '*Ruth*, *Rachab*, *the Queen of* '*Sheba*, *Hyram of Tyre*, *Naa-*'*man the Syrian*, *and the City* '*of Nineve*, are in the Cata-'logue of *Christians*.

Eusebius Pamph. in his Ecclesiastical History, saith, That *Abraham and the ancient Fathers were Christians*: And defines a *Christian* to be, one that *by the Knowledge and Doctrine of Christ excels in Moderation of Mind, in Righteousness and Continency of Life, and Strength of Vertue and Godliness towards one only God*; see *Scultetus* on him.

Clemens Alexandrinus saith, The Law of Nature and of Discipline is one. And *Moses* seems to call the Lord *the Covenant*: For he had said before, the Covenant was not to be sought in Scripture; for that is the Covenant, which God, the Cause of all, sanctioneth, whence his Name in *Greek* is derived.

for that Faith.
if the Faith be
One Nature, the
is of One Nature

And since the
is *Inward*, *Spiri-*
begotten of the
ortal Word, in
h is Life, and that
he Light of Men,
hat this *Word* of
and *Light* was *the*
; then no Book,
ing, or ingraving
ible and perish-
Matter, *can be the*
new.

gain, such as the
h is, such must the
be: But the Faith
s before, *Inward*
Spiritual; there-
the *Rule* must be
rd and *Spiritual*,
ch no *Meer Book*
be.

And in the Preaching of *Peter*, thou mayest find the Lord called the Word or *Reason*, and the *Law*. See his 1 *Book Strom.* at the end. And before Page 353. he saith, The Law and the Gospel is the Operation of one Lord, who is the Verbe and Wisdom of God: *And the Fear which the Law had bred, is merciful to Salvation: And the Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom.* That She (that is, Wisdom) that ministreth Providence, is Mistress and Good; and the Power of both procureth Salvation: The one Chastizing as Mistress; the other being Bountiful, as a Benefactor; for one must pass from Darkness to Life; and applying his Ear to Wisdom, *first be a Servant, then a faithful Minister, and so ascend into the number of Sons, and be brought into the elect Adoption of Sons.* That the *Law* works to make them *Immortal*, that *chuse to Live temperately and justly.* And again, *Evil Men do not understand the Law; but they that seek the Lord, do understand in every good thing.* And the whole first Book of the *Stromata* is especially to prove the Antiquity of the *one true Religion*, or *Philosophy*, as he calls it.

If the Scriptures were *the General Rule*,
must have always been a *Perfect* Rule,
since they were a Rule: But this is
ossible, *since they were many Hundred Years*
Writing, and are now *Imperfect* also as
Number; How then are they the *Perfect*
?

That

That they were not the *Perfect Rule* fore they were written must be gran and that they were many Hundred Y writing must also be allowed; and that are Imperfect now, as to *Number*, I prov

First, *Enoch*'s Prophecy is mentioned *Jude*, but not extant in the Bible: The B of the *Wars of the Lord*, Numb. 21. 14. Book of *Jasher*, Josh. 10. 13. 2 Sam. 1 The Book of *Nathan*, 2 Chron. 9. 29. Book of *Shemaiah*, 2 Chron. 12. 15. Book of *Jehu*; The Epistle of the Ap *Paul* to the *Laodiceans*, Collos. 4. 16. several others mentioned in the Script not now extant. And lastly, *Luke* says *many took in hand to relate from Eye-Wi the things most surely believed*, &c.

Now 'tis taken for granted that wrote many Years after *Luke*: Some *Luke* wrote before *Mark*: However, *shew* and *Mark* were not many, and to day we see no more than those Four in Bibles; and therefore many such Wri are lost: And if lost, then the Scripture aforesaid, not Perfect; and if Imperfect, can they be *the Rule of Faith*, since the of Faith must be Perfect?

3. My Third Reason is this, The Sc tures, however Useful to Edification Comfort, seem not in their own Nature Frame to have been compil'd and delive as the *General Rule*, and *Intire Body of R* but rather written upon particular Occa and Emergencies. The Doctrines are

ered throughout the Scriptures, insomuch hat those Societies who have given forth Verbal Confessions of their Faith, have been ecessitated to toss them to and fro, search ere and search there, to lay down this or he other Principle; and then as like the ori-inal Text as their Apprehensions can render : Whereas, were it as plain and distinct as he Nature of a Rule requires, they needed nly to have given their Subscription for a Confession. Besides, here They are *Proper*, here *Metaphorical*: In one place *Literally*, in nother *Mystically* to be accepted: Most times oints are to be prov'd by comparing and weighing Places coherent; where to allude ptly, and not wrong the Sense, is *Difficult*, nd requires a clear and certain Discerning, otwithstanding the Clamours upon us about nfallibility. Now from all this, with abun-lance more that might be said, plain it is hat the Scriptures are not plain, but to the piritual Man: Thus *Peter* said of *Paul's* Wri-ings, that *in many things they were hard to be nderstood*: Therefore not such a Rule which ought to be Plain, Proper and Intelligi-ble.

4. Again, the Scripture cannot be *the Rule* of Faith, because it cannot give Faith; for Faith is the *Gift of God which overcomes the World*: Neither of Practice, because it can-not distinguish of it self in all Cases what ought to be practised and what not; since it contains as well what ought not to be practised, as what ought. Eph. 2. 8. 1 John 5. 4.

This was the Case of Christ's Disciples who had no particular Rule in the Old Testament Writings, for the abolishing of some part of the Old Testament Religion: On the contrary they might have pleaded for the *Perpetuity* of it, because Christ said unto them, *Do as they say that sit in Moses's Chair*, more reasonably than many who make this a Plea now a-days for their invented Worships. What then guided them in their declaring void and relinquishing those things? For Instance, God gave Circumcision as a Gen. 17. *Sign for ever*: And *Paul* tells the Galatians Gal. 5. 1, 2. *That if they be circumcised, Christ should profit them nothing*: Was not this the Spirit of Truth that leads into all Truth, that the Apostles made the Judge and Rule of their Doctrine and Practices? So said *James* and the Assembly of the Apostles, when they told the Believers, *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and* Acts 15. 28. *to us*, &c.

5. These very Men that say *it is the Rule of Faith and Life*, diviate in their Proof from their Assertion, for the Scriptures no where say so of themselves. Here they fly to Meanings and Interpretations: The Question arises not about the Truth of the Text, for that is agreed on all hands, but the Exposition of it: If then I yield to that Man, do I bow to the Letter of the Text, or to his Interpretation? If the Letter, as manifestly I do, is the Scripture or *that Man's Sense* of it my Rule? Nay the Person so interpreting makes not the Scrip-

ture his Rule but his own Apprehenſion, whatever he may ſay to gain Credit to his Conceptions with others; then Mine it muſt needs be, I conſenting thereto.

6. How ſhall I be aſſured that theſe Scriptures came from God? I am bound to try all things: If all things, then Them amongſt the reſt. I would fain know what I muſt try them with? with the Scriptures? Then the Scriptures muſt be the Rule of my Examination, and Faith concerning themſelves, which is improper: If with the Spirit that gave them forth, which ſearcheth the deep things of God (a meaſure of which is given to me to profit withal) Then is it moſt congruous to call the Spirit, by way of *Excellency*, and not the Scriptures, *The Rule.*

7. If the Scriptures are the Rule, they muſt be ſo in the *Original*, or *Copies*: If in the *Original*, that is not extant, and ſo there would be no Rule in being; for the laſt of it that was extant, was the Evangeliſt *John*'s Hiſtory at *Epheſus*, not ſeen almoſt theſe thouſand Years: If the *Copies* muſt be the *Rule*, it were to be wiſhed we knew which were the higheſt to the Original, there being above *Thirty* in Number: This is undetermined, and for ought we ſee Indeterminable. And that which further confirms what I ſay, is the *Variety* of *Readings* which we find among thoſe *Copies*, amounting to *ſeveral Thouſands*: And if the *Copies* cannot, how

can the *Translations* be the *Rule*, so various (if not differing) from the true Sense of the Copies in many things, and one from another? Besides, I would fain know of those of our present Age, who thus contend for the Scriptures being the General Rule, &c. *in Opposition to the Spirit*, upon what foot they receive them into this Place and Authority: Is it by *Tradition*, or *Revelation*? I mean, the *Internal Testimony of the Spirit*; or the *External Award and Determination of Men*: If the former, they must unavoidably come over to us; for then the *Spirit* will and must be both *Rule* and *Judge*: If the Latter, I ask how are they assured that they are not miserably Abused by *Carelessness* or *Design*; since we see, that using utmost Diligence, both *Translation*, *Transcription* and *Printing*, are subject to numerous Mistakes, and those sometimes very material, against which the Scripture of it self can be no Fence?

But admit there were no Ground for any such Objection, I further demand of our Adversaries, if they are well assured of those Men that First Collected, Embodied and declared them *Authentick* by a Publick *Canon*? Which we read was in the *Council of Laodicea*, held 360 Years after Christ, though not as they are now received: During which time They had been tossed and tumbled through many Hands, and of many Judgments and Opinions. Some were received, and some rejected, and doubtless many *Thousands* of times transcribed; and it is not

probable

probable that they were also abused. If they miss in their Judgment here, they are gone till they come to us. I say, how do they know that these Men rightly discerned true from spurious? Either their Judgment was infallible in the Matter, or it was not: If it were, then there was such a thing as *Infallibility* since the Apostles Days, which is a Contradiction to your selves. But be it so that they were infallible; how came you to be assured they were so? Not by *Inspiration*; for that is dangerous Doctrine with you: Which way was it then? Not by *Tradition*. Was it by the *Scripture*? That were to say that the Scripture tells you that those Men that collected it for true, were Right in their Judgment: But we are yet to find any such place, and if it were so, that would but beg the Question. I cannot see any other Ground, besides your very great *Indulgence* to their Choice, which you call *Popery*, and *believing as the Church believes*, in other Folks. But if these Men were *fallible*, as your Opinion makes them, and their own Determinations prove them, what then? Doubtless your Condition will be very uncertain.

Now, sure it is that some of the Scriptures taken in by one Council for *Canonical*, were rejected by Another as *Apocryphal*; and that which was left out by the Former for *Apocryphal*, was taken in by the Latter for *Canonical*. Now visible it is that they contradicted each other, and as true that they

both erred, respecting the present Belief; For your *Canon* and *Catalogue* vary from theirs, and, let me say without Offence, from any *Catalogue* you can produce. Behold the *Labyrinth* of *Incertainties* you run your selves into, who go from that *Heavenly Gift* in *your selves*, by which the Holy Scriptures are truly Discerned, Relished and Distinguished from the Inventions and Abuses of Men!

8. Furthermore, If the Scriptures were the *Rule* of Faith and Life, *&c.* then because they cannot be the Rule in their *Translations*, supposing the ancient *Copies* were Exact, it cannot be the Rule to *far the Greatest Part* of Mankind; indeed to none but *Learned* Men: Which neither answers the Promise relating to Gospel-times, which is universal, nor the Necessity of all Mankind for a *Rule of Faith and Life.*

9. That the Scriptures are not the Rule of Faith and Life, is proved from those voluminous Discourses of *Cases of Conscience* that are extant among us: For had the Scriptures been as sufficient as the Nature of the Rule of Faith and Life Requireth, there had been no need of such Tracts: Every Man might have read his own Condition laid down in Scripture without those numerous Supplements. Doth not your own Language and Practice prove its Insufficiency to that End, at what time you both exhort to, and go in secret to seek the Mind of the Lord in this or that important Affair? Why do not you turn to Chapter and Verse for Satisfaction,

tisfaction, if the Scripture be appointed of God for the General Rule? Strange! That what is so common in the Mouths of all sorts, *viz.* God direct you (which implieth Inspiration and Revelation, or immediate Council or Guiding from God) should not be known, much less acknowledged by you in our Writings; but disdained with such scaring Epithetes, as *Enthusiasm*, *Familism*, *Fanaticism*, *Quakerism*, &c. In short, there are a * Thousand Cases, and not a few occurring almost daily, in which the Scripture cannot be *our plain and distinct Rule and Guide*: Yet has not God left himself *without a Witness* in any Bosom; *for his Grace that brings Salvation has appeared unto all Men, teaching them* that *believe* in it, *to deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present World.* And Christ Jesus the Eternal Word has for that End lighted every Man coming into the Wold *(viz.)* to Discover, Reprove, and Instruct about *Faith* and *Practice*. But it may be, and is objected by some;

There's laid down Scripture ny gener *Rule* how answer *fore Ma strates*; to act *Times o Suffering*

John 1. Titus 2. 11. 12.

Obj. *If this Law and Light in the Conscience had been enough, what need had there been of Scripture?*

Answ. The same Argument will hold against God, Christ, his Spirit and Grace, all which are sufficient, notwithstanding the Use and Benefit of Scripture. The Case was this: Man's Mind being estranged from the

Light and Spirit, through its wanderings after Visible and Perishing things: And in as much as the Light became thereby vailed from him, the Spirit as it were quenced, and the Law defac'd, God in peculiar Mercy to to the *Jews*, according to his Covenant with faithful *Abraham*, superadded, or Repeated (as *Ursin* terms it) the *Law inward*, by a *Declaration* of it Outwardly; that both God might not be without an outward Witness, as well as an inward (they having so much lost the Feeling thereof) And likewise more deeply to strike their Minds, by their Senses (into which their Minds were gone) and to meet them abroad, where they were roving and wandering from the *Law*, and *Light within*.

As it is great Vanity and Weakness to infer *Insufficiency* to the Light from the *Invisibility* and *Darkness* that are in Men, which is; so is it from God's superadding Scripture, and other external Assistances to Men in that State. Since their Blindness is occasioned through their Rebellion to the Law and Light within. What! would such have God, his Light and Spirit appear to, and converse with Peoples outward Senses? That can't be: The one is too Spiritual, the other too Carnal for any such thing. Or are they Insufficient, because they converse with Men through these exteriour things, suited to that weak State? Or tell me if the considerablest part of Scripture be any more than the declared Knowledge and Experience of such

were come to a more improved State in Teachings of that Light and Spirit; ich is therefore given forth, that others tering behind, might be ſtirred up and more prevailed with to follow them, as y had followed the Lord in the Light of Spirit? Certainly it can never be that ipture ſhould impeach the Light of Inſuf-ency, when that very Scripture is but the nd and Teachings of the Divine Light in ers, declared or recorded. Does the De-ration jarr or make weak that from whence ame? Or becauſe of God's Condeſcen-n for a time to External Mediums, ſhall y turn the Light and Spirit out of the Of-e of Rule and Judge? Or is to *lay down* In-uted Religion, as ſome ignorantly talk, preſs after that which was before, and ds thoſe temporary things? The Law *out-rd*, as a *Rule*, was but as *Moſes* till the *Son nt. The Servant abideth not in the Houſe for* r. The written Law held its place but the inward riſe in *more Glory* and *Bright-ſs*; or rather, till People became more ca-ble of being turned to it, and living with d in it? *In thoſe Days*, ſaid the Lord, *I will rite my Law in their Heart*, &c. They who y otherwiſe of Scripture, do pervert and uſe it; for there is nothing more clearly id down in it, from Beginning to End, than e *Rule and Reign of the Spirit*. *My King-m*, ſaid Chriſt, *is not of this World*. Again, John 18. 36. *e Kingdom of God is within: I will write my aw in their Hearts, and place my Fear in their inward*

Isa. 54. 13. *inward parts. All thy Children shall be*
of the Lord, and in Righteousness shall
Joel 2. 28. *established. I will pour out my Spirit*
Flesh. The Grace of God that brings Sal
hath appeared to all Men, teaching, &c.

Obj. *But if the Law engraven and del*
to Moses, *was a* Rule *to the* Jews; *why*
not the Law deliver'd by Christ, *and writ*
his Apostles, *be the* Rule *to Christians?*

Answ. Christ left nothing in writing
the *Rule* of *Faith* and *Practice* that we
of; and it is not to be thought that he
Less faithful in his House than *Moses*;
doubtless, had he intended the Rule of
Followers to have been a *written Rule*
would have left it upon Record with all
tuality, *This* must be believed, and *That* d
on Pain of Eternal Death. Nor did his
lowers write in the *Method* of a Rule, as
Law was written; nor did they *So* call
recommend what they writ.

But this leads me to my Eighth Rea
why the Scriptures cannot be the Rule und
the New Covenant, *&c.* For admitting
Law written by *Moses* were *The Rule*
Rule I grant it was) to the Jew outwa
yet Christ, the *Spiritual Leader* of a spiritu
Israel, writeth his *spiritual* Law in the *Hea*
as *Moses*, the *Outward* Israel's Leader w
the Law upon *Tables of Stone.* This w
God's Promise, and the Priviledge and Ble

of the New Covenant, that as the *Out-* Jew had an *Outward* Law, for a *Dire-* the Inward Jew should have an *Inward* for his *Directory*: And as the outward had an *outward Priest*, at whose Mouth ught to seek the Law, so the Jew *Inward*, Circumcision *in Spirit*, has an *Inward* *Spiritual High-Priest*, whose Lips preserve owledge; at whose Mouth he is to receive Law of Life. And *This* is his Rule, even who is the Ruler of his People Israel, o reigneth in Righteousness, and of the rease of whose heavenly Government re shall be no End. The *King*, *Ruler*, *dge*, *Law-giver*, *High-Priest*, *Law*, *Rule*, *ple*, *are all Spiritual*: so the Scriptures rm us; *My Kingdom*, said Christ, *is not his World*. Again, *The Kingdom of God is thin*: *I will write my Law in their Hearts*, *l place my Fear in their inward Parts*. *They ll be all taught of me*; *and in Righteousness ll they be established*, *The Tabernacle of God is ith Man*; *He will dwell with them*, *I will r out my Spirit on all Flesh*. *The Grace hath peared to all Men*, *teaching*, &c. *A Measure the Spirit is given to all Men to profit withal*. *e Inspiration of the Almighty giveth Under-nding*. *Whatsoever may be known of God is anifest within*. *Walk in the Spirit*: *If ye alk in the Light*, &c. *Come let us walk in the ight of the Lord*. *And there needed neither Sun r Moon to shine*; *for the Glory of God did light-n it*, *and the Lamb was the Light thereof*. *As rany as walk according to this Rule*, *Peace be on them*,

Mal. 2. 7.
Heb. 7. 24, 25, 26, 27.
Isa. 9. 6, 7.
Luke 17. 20, 21.
Heb. 8. 10.
Rev. 21. 3.
Joel 2. 28.
Tit. 2. 11, 12.
Job 32. 8.
Rom. 1. 19.
Gal. 5. 16.
1 John 1. 7.
Isa. 2. 5.
Rev. 21. 23.
Gal. 6. 15, 16.

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hath appeared to all Men, teaching, &c.

Obj. *But if the Law engraven and deliv*
to Moses, *was a* Rule *to the* Jews; *why h*
not the Law deliver'd by Christ, *and writte*
his Apostles, *be the* Rule *to Christians?*

Answ. Christ left nothing in writing f
the *Rule* of *Faith* and *Practice* that we ha
of; and it is not to be thought that he w
Less faithful in his House than *Moses*; An
doubtless, had he intended the Rule of h
Followers to have been a *written Rule*, h
would have left it upon Record with all Pu
ctuality, *This* must be believed, and *That* done
on Pain of Eternal Death. Nor did his Fo
lowers write in the *Method* of a Rule, as th
Law was written; nor did they *So* call o
recommend what they writ.

But this leads me to my Eighth Reason
why the Scriptures cannot be the Rule under
the New Covenant, *&c.* For admitting the
Law written by *Moses* were *The Rule* (a
Rule I grant it was) to the Jew outward,
yet Christ, the *Spiritual Leader* of a spiritual
Israel, writeth his *spiritual* Law in the *Heart*,
as *Moses*, the *Outward* Israel's Leader writ
the Law upon *Tables of Stone.* This was
God's Promise, and the Priviledge and Bles-
sing

of the New Covenant, that as the Out-
ard Jew had an *Outward* Law, for a Dire-
the Inward Jew should have an *Inward*
w for his *Directory*: And as the outward
w had an *outward Priest*, at whose Mouth Mal. 2. 7.
ought to seek the Law, so the Jew *Inward*, Heb. 7. 24,
d Circumcision *in Spirit*, has an *Inward* 25, 26, 27.
d *Spiritual High-Priest*, whose Lips preserve
nowledge; at whose Mouth he is to receive
e Law of Life. And *This* is his Rule, even
e who is the Ruler of his People Israel, Isa. 9. 6, 7.
ho reigneth in Righteousness, and of the
crease of whose heavenly Government
ere shall be no End. The *King*, *Ruler*,
Judge, *Law-giver*, *High-Priest*, *Law*, *Rule*,
Temple, *are all Spiritual*: so the Scriptures
form us; *My Kingdom*, said Christ, *is not*
of this World. Again, *The Kingdom of God is* Luke 17. 20,
within: *I will write my Law in their Hearts*, 21.
and place my Fear in their inward Parts. *They* Heb. 8. 10.
shall be all taught of me; *and in Righteousness* Rev. 21. 3.
shall they be established, *The Tabernacle of God is*
with Men; *He will dwell with them*, *I will*
pour out my Spirit on all Flesh. *The Grace hath* Joel 2. 28.
appeared to all Men, *teaching*, &c. *A Measure* Tit. 2. 11, 12.
of the Spirit is given to all Men to profit withal.
The Inspiration of the Almighty giveth Under- Job 32. 8.
standing. *Whatsoever may be known of God is* Rom. 1. 19.
manifest within. *Walk in the Spirit*: *If ye* Gal. 5. 16.
walk in the Light, &c. *Come let us walk in the* 1 John 1. 7.
Light of the Lord. *And there needed neither Sun* Isa. 2. 5.
nor Moon to shine; *for the Glory of God did light-* Rev. 21. 23.
en it, *and the Lamb was the Light thereof*. *As*
many as walk according to this Rule, *Peace be on* Gal. 6. 15, 16.
them,

them, and Mercy, and upon the Israel of God
What Rule? Not that of the *Old Legal*
ation which then passed aw[illegible]; but th[illegible]
of the καινὴ κτίσις,
new Creation, as it
be rendred, and as
sius cites one to
interpreted it; and
tius also does inter
it: Which is the W
of Life *Isaiah* spoke
An High-Way there
be, and it shall be
the Way of Holiness;
Unclean shall not pass
ver it, and wayfar
Men, though Fools
not err therein:
shall be no Lyon there,
ravenous Beast go there
but the redeemed
walk there; whic
Way, Teacher, Guide
Rule, Light, Spirit
and holy Unction th
directs and keepeth i
steady Paths of Truth
is *Christ Jesus our Lord*

Galat. 6. 16. τῷ κανόνι τούτῳ, *in this Rule*; as it is translated, *Phil.* 3. 16. which is spoken of the Measure of Attainment: And *Grotius* saith, in the *Manuscript*, *Rule* is not; so it must be understood, *let us walk in the same Attainment*; as also in 2 *Cor*, 10. 13, 15. in which three Places that word is only found: See *Erasmus*, *Vatablus*, *Zegerus*, *Cameron*. *Jac. Capellus* and *Grotius*, on those places, none whereof can be drawn to the Scriptures. *Zegerus* interprets this Place of *Gal.* 6. 16. thus, '*They that* '*have followed this Form of* '*Life, or Rule of the new* '*Creature, having turned a-* '*way from the invalid Cere-* '*monies of the Law*; *Peace*, &c. *Drusius* explains it from Chap. 5. 6. *The new Creation*. i. *Faith which worketh by Love*. *Grotius* saith, '*Rule* here is '*a Way made as to a Rule* '*that is plainly Right*; such '*is that Way of the new Cre-* '*ation*, which was foretold, '*Isa.* 42. 9. And signifies the '*State of the new Man*, of '*which Paul* speaks, *Col.* 3. '10. *Eph.* 2. 15. *Rom.* 6. 4.

Obj. *But do you not turn the Scriptures of for an Uncertain and Unserviceable Writing, and as good as reject and deny them altogether?*

Answ.

…w. Some indeed, to render us odious to all …tants, have said as much in our Names …e Consequence of our Principles; but …without great Injustice to us.

…he Scriptures are uncertain upon their …ndation, but not upon ours. Doth our …ssessing their Faith concerning the Scri…es, to be grounded upon their own Ima…tions or humane Traditions, make void …Scriptures or render them uncertain? By …means; for we would have them receiv…upon the Spirit's Testimony and Evi…ce which gave them forth. And though …cannot allow them to be *The Rule* of …h and Life under the Dispensation of …Gospel, which is *Power* and *Life* it self; …are they to be reverently *Read*, *Believed* …*Fulfilled* under the Gospel. For not…hstanding the Law written upon Stone, was …*Paul*'s Rule, after the Son of God was …vealed *in him*; yet the Son of God taught …d to *fulfil* the Righteousness declared by …t Law. If it be to deny and reject (as …ne have obviously said of us) yea, to vi…e the Scripture, because we cannot allow …o be *The Rule*, &c. *Paul* then may be said …deny, reject and vilifie the written Law, …what time the Law of the *Spirit of* …*fe* in Christ Jesus became *his Rule*. There …a great Difference between asserting that …e Spirit is the Rule, and casting away and …lifying of Scripture. And indeed it is but …n old Fetch of the Devil's, to pretend Ho…our to the Letter that he might the more …unsuspectedly

unsuspectedly oppose the bringing in
Dispensation of the Spirit; which the
it self testifies of and to. They that
to be led of the Spirit, arrive at the E
which the Scripture was given forth
Apostle *John* did as good as say the
thing, when he told them to who
wrote, *That the Anointing which they h*
ceived and abode in them, would lead th
all Truth; and that they needed not th
Man should teach them: To deny this to
been the Saints Teacher, is to de
a Proposition as is in the whole Scri
And that one Age of Christianity
have one Rule, and another Age an
Rule: That Age the Spirit, and This b
Letter, is more then any Man can p
Yet did *John*'s so writing to the Believe
valid the Scripture, or vilifie his own
stle? I would think none could talk so
How then doth our Exalting the Ligh
Spirit of Christ, which fulfils the Scrip
(by bringing such as are led by it to e
the good things therein declared
vilifie the Scriptures? Does our living up
them by an higher Rule make us to deny
reprobate them? *Erasmus* and *Gratius* th
them then most to be valued, when
are Witnesses of their Truth in themselv
See them on 2 *Pet.* 1. 19, 20. I do ac
ledge they contain an Account of sev
heavenly Prophecies, Godly Reproofs,
structions and Examples that ought to be
beyed and followed.

Object. *If so, Then how are they not* A Rule *Faith and Life.*

Answ. A Rule and the Rule, are two things. By *The Rule* of Faith and Practice, understand, *the Living, Spiritual, Immediate, Omnipresent, Discovering, Ordering Spirit of* [illegible]: And by *A Rule*, I apprehend some *Instrument*, by and through which this *Great* [illegible] *Universal Rule* may convey its Directi[illegible]. Such a *Subordinate, Secondary* and *Declaratory Rule* we never said several parts of Scripture were not: Yet we Confess the [illegible]ion of our Obedience, is not meerly because they are there written (for that were [illegible]) but because they are the *Eternal Pre*[illegible] *of the Spirit* in Mens Consciences, *There* [illegible]peated and Declared. It is the *Testimony of* [illegible] *Spirit* which is *The True Rule* for believing [illegible]d understanding of the Scripture; therefore [illegible]t the Scripture, but the *Spirit of Truth* must [illegible] *The* [illegible] for our believing and under[illegible]anding Them. Thus held the Ancients.

Bp. Rob. Sand. *de Regul. Cons. Præl. 4ta. sect.* 31.

Tertullion saith, *Worldly Wisdom the Lord* [illegible]*lls Foolishness, he hath chosen the foolish things* [illegible] *the World to the confounding of Philosophy; for that is the Matter of Worldly Wisdom, a divine Interpreter of the divine Nature and Dispo*[illegible]*ings.*

Tertul. *de Prescript. Heretic.* pag. 204.

Justin Martyr in Exposit. fid. *The Interpretation of the Scriptures is to be accommodated to the Will of the Doctrine of the Spirit; and not to humane Reasonings.*

Dell. *Confut. of Simps.* p. 89, 90.

Hieron

Hieron Tom. 4. 70. *Hieron* saith, *The Scriptures (must be) ...with Spiritual Exposition.*

Bp. Jewel, p. 532. *Epiphanius* saith, *Only to the Childre... the Holy Ghost all the Scriptures are plain... clear.*

Nor were the most approved *Protestan...* any sort (who have been so reputed in ... position to *Popery*) of another mind. ... the Substance of the Fourth Article e... bited against the *Lutherans* in the Co... *Trent*, as an Erroneous Doctrine they ... *That to understand the Scripture, neither Gl... Comment is necessary; but only to have the S... of a Sheep of Christ's Pasture.*

Polano. Hist. Counc. Tr. p. 158.

Erasmus on 1 Pet. 1. 19. Ib. on 1 Cor. 2. *Erasmus* tells us, *What Man sets forth Man's Device, may be received by Man's W... But the thing that is set forth by the Inspiration the Holy Ghost, requireth an Interpreter insp... with the like Spirit*; and without the ... *spiration* of it the Secrets of God cannot ... known.

Luther Tom. 3. fol. 169. *Luther* giveth us his Mind thus: *The Scr... tures are not to be understood, but ... Spirit by which they were writ.*

Peter Martyr, Com. loc. p. 1. c. 6. *Peter Martyr*, that famous *Italian* Prot... stant, teacheth us, *The Spirit is the Abu... by which we must assure our selves for und... standing of the Scriptures, that thereby we m... discern between Christ's Words, and a Strang...* (quoting Christ's words) *My Sheep kn... my Voice*, and several other places of Scri... ture.

Ibid. p. 2. c. 18. Again, *The Spirit of God revealeth the Tru... in the Scriptures.*

H. Bulling...

H. Bullinger Decad. 4. Serm. 8. *Men fetch the Understanding of Heavenly Things, and knowledge of the Holy Ghost from no where else, but from the same Spirit.*

John Bradford answer'd to the Archbishop of *York* thus, *We know the Scriptures, as Christ's Sheep, by the same Spirit that wrote and spake them, being thereby* [illegible] &c. Book of Martyr 3 vol. p. 258.

[illegible] teacheth thus in his Institutes: *It is necessary the same Spirit that spake by the mouth of the Prophets, should Pierce into our hearts, to perswade us, that they Faithfully delivered that which was committed to them of God.* Calvin. Instit. lib. 4 cap. 8.

Beza saith, 'That the Way of understanding Prophecies, and referring them to the right Scope, must be sought or fetcht from the *Same Spirit*, which dictated them to the Prophets themselves; and more to that purpose. Beza on 2 Pet. 1. 19.

W. Tindal, call'd the *English* Apostle by *J. Fox*, saith, 'It is impossible to understand in the Scriptures, more than a *Turk*, for any that hath not the Law of God *writ in the Heart* to fulfil it. Tindal. Works, p. 319. Edit.

Bp. *Jewel* says thus against *Harding*, 'The Spirit of God is bound neither to Sharpness of Wit, nor to abundance of Learning: *Flesh and Blood* is not able to understand the Holy Will of God, without **Special Revelation: Without This Special help and Prompting of God's Spirit**, the Scripture is to the Reader, be Jewel against Harding, p. 532, 534.

'he never so Wise and well Learned, as the
'Vision of a **Sealed** *Book.*

Dr. Ames *against* Bellarm. *l.* 1. *c.* 5. *Thes.* 32.

D. *Ames*, a great Father of the *Independent*, saith upon occasion of *Bellarmin's* words; 'The *Anointing of the Holy Spirit* doth teach 'the Faithful, to understand those things 'which they received of the Apostles; there- 'fore to understand the Scriptures in those 'things which are necessary to [illegible] with more to that purpose.

Vatablus on *Job* 32. 8. with *Dra[illegible]* and others, speak to the same effect.

G. Cradock *Divine drops* page 217.

G. *Cradock*, a famous Independent Preacher preach'd, 'That the Scripture is a *Spe[illegible]* 'Thing without the Spirit.

C. Goad *Refr. drops*, page 12.

Ch. Goad, an Eminent Separate in the Worl[illegible] stil'd *B. D.* of K. College in *Cambridge*, an an *Independent* Pastor, thus taught, 'There i 'no Knowledge of Christ, nor of the Scrip 'ture, but *by Revelation.*

Exercit. 2, 7. 9. *against* Quak.

D. *J. Owen*, a Man of greatest Fam among the present *Independents*, saith, 'Th '*Publick*, *Authentick* and *Infallible Interpreter* 'the holy Scripture, is He who is the Au 'thor of them; from the **Breathing** 'whose Spirit it **derives** all its **Au** 'rity, **perspicuity and Authority.**

So that we see, upon the Judgment of ma ny considerable Persons, the Scripture is n Rule for our believing and understanding It self; and therefore not *The Rule* of Fai and Practice concerning the things there declared.

I w

I will give a short Instance in Christ's words about *Regeneration*: He taught (and strange it was, no doubt, to wise *Nicodemus*) *That unless a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.* This is as plain a Proposition as can be laid down, and may be credited *Historically*: But what is that to the *Knowledge* and *Experience* of the New Birth? That they are never like to be informed of there. Nor can that Scripture be my Rule in that Heavenly Travel, respecting the many and wonderful Trials and Exercises that are to be met with in the way to It: Neither can any other Writing whatever. This only is the Office of that *Spirit and Word Immortal*, by which we are begotten again. What then is my Rule, to inform, order, strengthen and lead through the whole Operation, but the *Same Spirit*? All Doctrinal Scripture was experienced before written, or they had not been true Witnesses who wrote it.

Now that which was their Rule can only guide us into the same Experiences; nor are they to be rightly known before experienced: *Do my Will, and you shall know more of my Doctrine*, saith Christ. I read the History of such things; This saves not: Neither can the *History* be the Rule leading into the *Mystery*: That belongs only to the Spirit, that searcheth out the deep things of God. Consequently the Spirit, and not the Scripture, is the Rule for *So* believing and living. John 7. 17. 1 Cor. 2. 10.

Obj. *But is not this to make void the* Protestants *Plea against the* Papists, viz. *That the Scriptures are the Rule of Faith and Practice?*

Answ. No such matter: For the Question was not, Whether the Spirit of Christ or the Scripture was the Rule; But, Whether the *Scripture*, which is *God's Tradition*, or *Popish* Traditions were the Rule to measure the Truth of Doctrines and Practices by? We grant that particular Scriptures, rightly understood, may measure what is agreeable or disagreeable to them: That is, such Doctrines and Practices as are contrary to that part of Scripture, more particularly relating to our days, are questionable by the Scripture; especially since all Parties pretend that what they say and do is according to Scripture: Yet this concludes not the Scripture to be *The General and Evangelical Rule.*

Obj. *But if God had not revealed those things that are in* Scripture, *by it to us, how could they have been known by us?*

Answ. They were known by the Light and Spirit of Christ before they were written (for from being written they are called Scripture) Therefore it is said, That the Prophets searched diligently what, and what manner of Time the Spirit of Christ, **that was in them**, did signifie, when it testified **before hand** of the Sufferings of Christ. No

1 Pet. 1. 11.

are they ever the more reveal'd to the blind and dark Mind, because they are written. The Mysteries of Regeneration are as *Puzling* to Natural Wit and Earthly Wisdom, as before. Therefore well said *Epiphanius*, 'Only 'to the Children of the holy Ghost all 'the holy Scriptures are plain and 'easie. Mens going to *hammer* out Principles, without this Infallibe Guide and Rule, hath been the Cause of that great Confusion that is over Mankind about Religion to this very day.

Obj. *But how else could you have known those Prophesies to be true, for that is not matter of Witnessing, but Fore-telling?*

Answ. That is an extraordinary Revelation, not falling within the Ordinary Discoveries that are absolutely necessary to Man's Salvation, by which he shews his Power and Faithfulness, that he is God, and can foretell, and will bring to pass: But therefore must there be an Extraordinary Light or Spirit, [illegible] or rather an Extraordinary Sight and Sense from *One and the Same* Light and Spirit in them? Besides, That which gives me to *Believe* and *Savour* it to be from the Spirit, and not by Imposture, is my Rule for believing it. Now that the Spirit so doth, both *Calvin* and *Beza*, as before cited, assert for me, *viz.* 'The *Same* Spirit, that spake by 'the Mouth of the Prophets, *must Pierce into* 'our Hearts, *to perswade us, that they Faithfully*

'*fully Declared* that which was committed 'to them of God.

Obj. *But this Light you speak of could not tell you which way Sin came into the World: That there was an* Adam *and* Eve, *that they fell after that manner, and that Sin so entred the World: That Christ was born of a Virgin, suffered Death and rose again: That you ought not to Swear in any case,* &c. *If the Scripture had not told you so.*

Answ. That is boldly said: But consider well: *Moses*, says the vulgar Opinion, had that Account of the *Creation*, above Two Thousand Years after it, by *Revelation*, which we find in *Genesis*. Now that there could be no Revelation without this Divine Light or Spirit, which is the Life of the Eternal Creating Word, must needs be granted: *For*, saith the Apostle *Paul, the Spirit of God knoweth* Only *the Things of God*; and whatever makes manifest is *Light*: And that the Spirit and Light are One, tho' Two Names, has been sufficiently evidenced already. If then it was *this Light* of the Eternal Word, that delivered those past things to *Moses*, and gave that Prospect of future things to the Prophets, as no doubt it was, if the Scripture be Credible, then to say, the Light or Spirit could not do it, is *Blasphemous* as well as absurd. Again To argue, because the Light does not Reveal every Circumstance of History to each Individual that hath already an Account thereof,

Cor. 2. 10. 11. Eph. 5. 13.

of, therefore it could not, is Unreasonable. Were the History of the Transactions of Christ and his Followers wanting, as before *Moses* was that of *Adam* and his Posterity, and that the Lord saw it needful to acquaint Mankind therewith, no doubt but the Light and Spirit which revealed the Account of the Creation, above Two Thousand Years after, to *Moses*, and fore-told several Hundred Years many of those Transactions of Christ by the Prophets, would also have supplied that Want: But inasmuch as an Account is extant, and therefore not needed, that Objection is vain.

Again it does not follow, because every Man has a Measure of Light to Inform and Rule him, that therefore he must needs know all which that Light knows, or is able to Reveal to him. I return that Argument thus upon our Adversaries: They say they have the Spirit of God; *Then they know all that the Spirit of God knows, or can reveal to them:* If the latter be absurd, then the former. Again say they, *The Light within did not reveal Christ to the* Gentiles, *and that Christ should be born of a Virgin*, &c. *therefore Insufficient:* I return upon them thus; The Spirit of God, given to the Children of *Israel*, *Neh.* 9. 20. did not acquaint them that Christ should be *born of a Virgin*, nor much more of his *Life* and *Bodily Transactions*; therefore the Spirit of God was Insufficient. The like may be concluded against the Spirit in the Prophets: For 'tis manifest from 1 *Pet.* 1. 10, 11.

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that the Spirit had not revealed to all the Prophets the Time of Christ's Appearance and Sufferings: Was the Spirit therefore an *Insufficient* Rule to them? But that which falls heavieſt upon our Oppoſers is this, That the Scriptures by their own Argument, are a moſt *Imperfect Account* themſelves of what was done, not relating the hundredth part of things; therefore as Inſufficient in not relating *what is behind*, as they would weakly render the Light or Spirit in not revealing to every Individual thoſe things which are already paſt: Nay, they may as well infer Inſufficiency to the Spirit, or the Light within, *in that it does not now ſhew all that ſhall be to the End of the World*, which in their proper Seaſons there will be a Neceſſity to know, as to reflect Inſufficiency upon it, or because it did not fore-tell things that are now paſt unto former Ages, or *needleſly* Reveal them over again to us in this Age. Neither is *Hiſtory*, or can it be, the Rule of that Faith and Life we ſpeak of, which are ſo abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation; which is the Faith that God and not Hiſtory gives, and that works not by Hiſtory, but by *Love*, and overcomes the World; by which Millions of *Hiſtorical* Believers are overcome, and wallow in the Spirit and Practice of: And the Rule muſt be anſwerable to the Nature and Workings of the Faith: The ſame in Point of Practice, which is Duty Done. Now Hiſtory, though it inform me of others Actions, yet it does not follow that it is the

Rule

ule of *Duty* to me, since it may relate to ctions not imitable, as in the Case of *Adam* nd *Eve* in several Respects, and Christ's be- g born of a *Virgin*, *dying for the Sins of the orld*, &c. wherefore this cannot be *The ule of Duty*. The like may be said of the ewish Story, that was the particular Concern nd Transaction of that People.

Obj. *But these things ought to be believed.*

Answ. I say so too, where the History has eached, and the Spirit of God hath made Conviction upon the Conscience; which, ays D. *J. Owen*, as before Cited, gives them *uthority*, *Verity* and *Perspicuity*: But where his History has not reached any People, or hey dye ignorant of it, they are not re- ponsible for not believing any such Passages, s saith *Bishop Sanderson*. There one thing to say the Scriptures ought to be Read, Believed nd Fulfilled, and another thing to say they re the *Evangelical Rule* of Faith and Life: for when I read, believe and witness them fulfilling, I must needs have a Rule by which o Read, Understand, Believe and Witness hem: Which being the *Divine Light and Spirit of Christ*; it must be That, and not hemselves that must be my Rule for so Read- ing, Understanding and Believing Them. *Prelect.* 4. §. 21, 22.

And further, to prove that the Light and Spirit within the Heathens was sufficient to discover these things, it is granted on all hands that the *Sybills* had divine Sights: I mean

mean not those made in their Name by so
Professors of Christianity, as is charged up
them to gain Authority upon the Gent
against which *Blundel* writes: But th
that are acknowledged, who prophesied
a *Virgin's bringing forth a Son*, and that
should *Destroy the Serpent*, and *Replenish*
Earth with *Righteousness*, as is before ci
out of *Virgil*, who took it out of the
mains of *Cumæa*'s Verses, then among t
Romans.

And for the Practical Part of the Objec
on, *viz.* How should we have known
had been Unlawful to Swear at all in a
Case, if *Mat.* 5. 34. had not been (which
of most weight in this Case, because it is ma
ter of Duty, and called particularly by so
an *Evangelical* Precept, being a Step abo
the Righteousness of the outward La
among the Jews) I have this to say f
Proof of the Light's Sufficiency.

There were among the Jews themselve
long before Christ came, an entire Peopl
that would not Swear; to wit, the Ess

Josephus, Wars of the *Jews*, l. 2. c. 7.

'They keep their Promises (says *Josephus*
'and account every Word they speak
'*more Force than if they had bound it with a*
'*Oath*: And they shun Oaths *worse* than Per
'jury; for they esteem him condemned fo
'a Lyar, who without it is not believed.

Philo, de Spec. leg. & decalog.

Philo writes to the same purpose, an
taught himself, that it was best to *abstain fro*
Swearing; that one's Word might be take
instead of an Oath.

An

And *Pythagoras*, in his Oration to the *Crotonian Senators*, exhorted them thus, 'Let no man attest God *by Oath*, though in Courts of *Judicature*; but *Use* to speak such things that he may be credited *without* an Oath. Laert. Hermip. & Orig. contr. Celf.

The *Scythians* are said to have told *Alexander* themselves, did think not that *Scythians* confirm their Friendship by Oath; *They Swear by keeping their Word.* Quint. Curtius, in vit. Alex.

And *Clinias*, a Greek, and follower of *Pythagoras*, rather chose to suffer the Fine of *three Talents* (which make 300 *l.* English,) than to lessen his Veracity by *taking* of an Oath. Which Act was greatly commended by *Basilius*, who upbraided the Christians of his time with it: Thereby (after our Adversaries Way of drawing Consequences) preferring the Light of the *Gentiles* before the Light of the Christians: Though indeed the Light was and is always *One* in it self: but the Christian did not live up so closely unto it as the Heathen did, and therefore took a greater Liberty, and walked in a broader way. H. Grotius on Mat. 5. 34.

I would now know of our Opposers if they can yet think the Light that preach'd in his Doctrine in the Mount, was the same with that Light that shined in the Consciences of those *Gentiles*, so many Hundred years before that Sermon was writ or preached, who so plainly believed, practiced and taught it, Yea and pray? Perhaps some will not stick out, while the more moderate will admit, and conclude Ignorance and Folly have

have made all this Opposition against us, a
that of a Truth, *The Voice which cried*, Pro
4, 6. *Unto you, O Men, I call, and my Voi
to the Sons of Men; hear for I will speak
cellent Things*, was also heard by the Gen
and that what concerned the Doctrine
Holy Living was not hid from them: I me
Evangelically so; provided Christ's *Heav
Sermon* upon the Mount, related by *M
thew* the Evangelist, may be esteemed *S*
For their Writings flow with *Amens* th
unto.

But allowing our Adversaries that
Voice was then so *Low*, and the Manif
tion of the Light so *Small*, as it discov
not many of those things before-mention
could that give reasonable Men Ground
conclude, Therefore the Divine Wisdom
Light was *Insufficient*; or that the Di
Wisdom or Light was not then, and sho
not in other Ages become *The Rule a
Guide* of the Children of Men? Yet f
false Consequences have been the Corn
Stone and Foundation of our Oppo
Building against us; and no reasonable M
I think, will attempt to clear it from be
a *Sandy* One.

OF THE
Judge of Controverſie.

I Shall explain what I mean by theſe Terms.

A *Judge*, is one that has not *only Power* to determine, but *Diſcerning* to do it *Rightly*.

Controverſie, is a Debate between two Parties about the *Truth* or *Falſhood* of any Propoſition to be determined by that *Judge*.

From whence I am led to aſſert, that the Judge of Controverſie muſt be *certain and unerring*.

And though this may ſeem ſtrange to ſome, 'tis nevertheleſs true in it ſelf: For if the Judge be *fallible*, he may indeed ſilence the Contending Parties by his Authority, but not the Controverſie by a *certain* Judgment, ſince he may as well determine *Falſly* as *Truly*. So that Controverſie can never be rightly determined by a fallible Judge, therefore He is no true Judge of Controverſie. Indeed it is abſurd, and a Contradiction in it ſelf to think otherwiſe; ſince he that is uncertain can never be certain of his Deciſion: And if not a certain one, then none to the Purpoſe. Nor ought any Perſon, no otherwiſe judged, that is perſuaded of the Truth of his Cauſe, to let fall his Belief upon ſo Doubtful a Determination; ſince he moves not only without Conviction, but againſt

gainst Conviction: And which is worse, [illegible] is not ascertained of the Truth of what he [illegible] required to submit to. Therefore of all Pe[illegible] ple they are most condemnable, who, no[illegible] withstanding they keep so great a stir abo[illegible] Religion, and sometimes use coercive Me[illegible] to compass their designed Uniformity, [illegible] knowledge to us *they are not Certain of th[illegible] own Faith.*

Since then the Judge must be unerring, [illegible] will be worth our while to consider, wh[illegible] this infallible Judge is to be found. *There [illegible] none Good but God*, said God himself, wh[illegible] manifested in the Flesh, that is, *Originally*, [illegible] as of himself: So truly there is none Infa[illegible] ble but *God*, as of himself; yet as the [illegible] preme Good is communicated unto Man [illegible] cording to measure; so (as well says [illegible] *Latimer*) is there *Infallibility*, *Certainty* or *A[illegible] surance* of the Truth of things given to M[illegible] according to Capacity: Otherwise M[illegible] would be oblig'd to believe and obey, [illegible] that upon *Damnation*, those things concern[illegible] ing which there can be no *Certainty* whether they be true or false.

Book Martyr. vol. 3. p. 475.

Immanuel, *God with Men*, as he is their *Rule*, so their *Judge*; he is the *Law-giver* and therefore the best Interpreter of any Point that may concern his own Law: And Men are so far Certain as they are subject to his *Voice*, *Light*, or *Spirit* in them, and no farther; for, *humanum est errare*, Man is Erra[illegible] rable. Nor can any thing rescue him out of Error, or preserve him from the Infect[illegible] on

of it, but the ſound and certain Judg-ent that God, by the *Light* of his *Spirit* ves unto him.

Obj. *But is not the Scripture the* Judge *of ntroverſie?*

Anſw. How can that be, ſince the Que-ion moſt times ariſes about the Meaning of cripture? Is there any place tells us, with-t Interpretation, whether the *Socinian* or *rinitarian* be in the Right, in their differing pprehenſions of the *Three that bear Record*, c. alſo the *Homouſian* and *Arrian* about hriſt's *Divinity*; or the *Papiſts* or *Proteſtants* bout *Tranſ-ſubſtantiation*? If then things are ft undefined and undetermined, I mean iterally and Expreſly, in the Scripture; nd that the Queſtion ariſes about the *Senſe* f Words, doth the Scripture determine hich of thoſe Interpreters hit the Mark? s this is not reaſonable to think, ſo muſt it e acknowledged, that if Interpretation de-cide the Matter in Controverſie, then not the Scripture but the *Interpreter* muſt be the Judge.

Now this Interpreter muſt either interpret by his own meer Wiſdom or Spirit, called by the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 2. 11. the Spirit of a Man; who by weighing the Text, conſult-ing the Intent of the Writer, comparing pla-ces together, gives the Judgment which the Scripture does not give of it ſelf, or, from the Spirit of God, which gives Underſtand-ing,

ing, as *Job* 32. 8. and as the same Apostle saith, in the same place, *searcheth the deep things of God:* If the first, then a *Fallible*; if the last, then an *Infallible Judge.*

I would fain know, whether it was the Scripture or the Holy Ghost that presided among the Apostles, when they were come together, *Acts* 15. when they said, *It seemeth good to the Holy Ghost and to us*, &c. If the Holy Ghost, then pray give us a plain Scripture to prove we are to have another Judge now; If that cannot be done, then we must have the *Same*, and consequently an *Infallible Judge*, viz. the Spirit of Truth which leads Christians into all Truth, and is given of God, by Christ for that very End.

Obj. *'Tis granted that the Spirit is* Infallible. *But how shall I know that any Man determines a thing by this Spirit, and does not rather obtrude his own Sense upon us, under that specious Pretence.*

Answ. By the *same* Spirit; As well said *Gualt. Cradock*, G. Crid. Divine Drops, p. 210. 'The Way to know whether 'the Spirit be in us is its *Own Evidence*. 'And that is the *Way* to know it in others 'too: And the Man that hath the Spirit 'may know the Spirit in another; There is, 'saith he, 'a kind of *Sagacity* in the Saints to 'this Purpose. Which is also true in the Judgment of abundance of *Protestant* Writers: For as they held that no Man could know the Scriptures but by the *same* Spirit which

which indicted them; ſo conſequently that *the ſame* Spirit only could aſſure him of the Truth of the ſaid Interpretation. And *Peter Martyr*, as before quoted, tells us, The Holy Ghoſt is the *Arbiter* or *Judge*. Alſo D. *J. Owen* ſaith, That the Holy Ghoſt is the *Only Authentick Interpreter of the Scripture*: And if the *Only Authentick*, then the *Only* and *Infallible Judge*; then the Judge of the *Mind* or *Meaning* of Scripture, is both an *Only* and an *Infallible* Judge. But to wave this: Does not the very ſame Objection lie againſt the Senſe of Scripture, ſince one ſays This is the Senſe, and another That? To know God's Mind Men muſt come to God's Spirit, elſe Difficulties of that ſort are Inſuperable.

In ſhort, It were greatly to be wiſht that all Men would hold themſelves unconcern'd, in diſputing about what they have not received an Aſſurance of from the Holy Spirit; ſince they beat but the Air and obtain no ſolid Satisfaction, neither can they upon any other Bottom. God never proſtrates his Secrets to Minds diſobedient to what they do already know. Let all *Practice* what they *ſurely* know to be their Duty, and be ſparing in their ſearch after *Nice* and *Unknown* Matters. Weighty and Seaſonable was and is the Apoſtle's Saying, *Nevertheleſs, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the ſame Rule.* Where he both limits us to the preſent Knowledge communicated to us, and exhorts us to live up to that; and if any thing be further neceſſary for us, *God in due*

Phil. 3. 16.

time will reveal it by his Spirit, that o gives to Know, Discern and Judge of t things that are of God.

Obj. *But how will this determine the Con versie, and allay the Fury of Debates that ar foot in the World?*

Answ. Nothing like it if Man *adhere* to i and if he does not, there is no way left b the Wrath that is to be reveal'd. But mo Persuasions are agreed about the absolu Necessaries in Religion, from that Light an Witness God has placed in Man's Consci ence, viz. *That God is*; *That he is a Reward of them that diligently seek him*; *That the Wa of God is a Way of Purity, Patience, Meekne* &c. *without which no Man can see the Lor* Nay, they accord in some considerable Ma ters superadded, as some of them speak, t wit, *That God was manifested extraordinarily i the* Flesh; *that he gave his Life for the World that such as believe and obey his Grace in the Hearts, receive Remission of Sins and Life Ever lasting.* Now I say, since these things Men generally Consent to, let them live up t them; and *forbear* wanton Scrutinies after Things or Notions that gender to Strife and Contention, and leave not Mankind bet but rather worse than they found them, and the World would be soon *Rid* of Controver sie. *Holy Living*, and not Disputing, would be the *Business* of Mankind. What more ex cellent Judgment can be given then that Men

their Contentions about Notions and Opinions, and betake themselves to the *Practice* of that *Good* which God hath already shewn unto them; as spake both the Prophet *Micah* 6. 8. and the Apostle *Paul*, *Rom.* 12. 19. And if any thing be revealed to one more than another, let the rest judge in the Spirit, or be silent till God manifest more to them, in order to Right Judgment.

'Tis good to *Try all things*; but we must have *something* to try them by; and what ought that to be, but the *Spirit that searcheth*, and *the Anointing that teaches all things*, which is Truth it self. Here Mankind will live in Love, having at least Natural Affections (now lost by the Barbarity of some of their cruel Religions, or Heats for their Opinions) and a Judgment of things will be made, not from the Rash, Partial, Short-sighted and Froward Mind of Man, but that *Eternal Light* and *Spirit* that never erred; which, however disgustful to some Protestants in this Age, was no false Doctrine in the Account of *John Philpot* and Bp. *Latimer*, two great Founders of the *Reformation* in *England*.

1 Cor. 2. 1 John 2. 20, 27.

The first, in his Answer to the Bishop of *Chichester*, reproving his Confidence about true Faith in Christ; *These Heretick*s, saith he, *take upon them to be sure of all things they stand in.* 'Let him doubt (saith *John Philpot*) 'of his Faith that listeth; God give me *Always* to believe that I am sure of true Faith and Favour in Christ.

B. Martyr vol. 3. P. 577.

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B. Martyr vol. 3. P. 577.

The second, in his Answer to Sir Ed. *Baynton*, objecting the Uncertainty of Mar. B. Martyr vol. 3. p. 475. in what he calls Truth, thus recorded by *J. Fox*, 'Your Friends deny not, but that 'certain Truths are communicated to us 'according to Capacity: But as to my Pre- 'sumption and Arrogancy; either I am cer- 'tain or uncertain that it is Truth that I 'preach; if it be Truth, *why may not I so?* If I be uncertain, *why dare I be so 'bold as to preach it?* And if your Friends 'be Preachers themselves, after their Sermon 'I pray you ask them, Whether they be 'Certain and Sure they preach the Truth or 'no; and send me word what they say, 'that I may learn to speak after them. If 'they say they be *Sure, you know what fol- 'lows*; if they say they be *Unsure, when 'shall you be Sure, that have so Doubtful and 'Unsure Teachers.*

Let not Protestants, *for Shame*, judge us for owning a Doctrine that is *Confessed* and *Confirmed* by some of the *Worthies* of their own Ancestors, *viz.* That an *Unerring Certain* or *Infallible* Judgment in things *Necessary* to Salvation, is both Possible and Requisite, and that God communicates it by his Spirit to the Souls of Men.

The

The Conclusion.

TO Conclude, *Immanuel*, a word suited not only to that Appearance, but the whole Dispensation of the Gospel, imports, *God nigh to or with Men: The Tabernacle of God is with Men; he will dwell in them, and walk in them: They shall be all taught of me, and in Righteousness shall they be established:* That is, by the Spirit of his Son. And this admits not of any *Book*, or *Literal* Rule or Judge, to come between that *Indwelling* Spirit of Light, Life and Wisdom from God, and the Soul, as its *Rule* of Faith and Practice. Rev. 21. 3. 7. Isa. 54. 13.

And because it is the unutterable Goodness of God to People in these latter Days, as the *Sum* of Scripture-Prophecy, thus to make known himself; we are incessant in our Cries unto them, that they will turn their Minds *Inward* (now abroad, and taking up their Rest in the Externals of Religion) that they may *hear his Heavenly Voice* and *Knocks, and let him in, and be Light of him to know and do his Will*, that they may come to be *Experienced* and *Expert* in the School of Christ: *For never Man spake and taught, as he livingly speaks and teaches in the Consciences of those who diligently hear him, and are willing to be taught of him the Knowledge of his Ways.* The Priest was Outward, but he is now *Inward*; the Law Outward,

Outward, but it is now *Inward*. *And now* Rom. 11. 28, 29. *he is no more a Jew that is one Outward, nor that Circumcision which is outward in the Flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and Circumcision is that of the Heart*, in the Spirit, *and not in the Letter, whose Praise is not of Men, but of God.* Which is so far from lessening the Authority of the Scriptures of Truth, that unless This be Man's *Rule and Judge in the Reading and Believing of them*, he can never understand them *Rightly*, or keep their sayings *Faithfully*. And indeed, as before I have expressed, I cannot but say, That Man (whilst *unregenerated*) setting his *Wit* and *Wisdom* to *Fathom* and *Comprehend* the Intention of the Holy Ghost in many of those Writings, hath occasioned that *Confusion*, *Darkness* and *Perplext Controversie*, that now so lamentably Pesters the World: In which State, for all the External Imitations of the Ancients in some temporary and figurative Parts of Worship, I am to tell such, and that from the Spirit of the Lord God of all Truth, *They will never be Accepted.*

The Utmost of that Literal Knowledge, Historical Faith, and Outward Religion, is but as the *Old Heavens that are to be wrapped up as a Scroul, and the Old Wine and Bottles that belong not to the Kingdom of God*: Such Believers may flatter on themselves, and at last cry, Lord, Lord; But alas! They shall never enter into the Rest that God hath reserved for his Regenerated and Redeemed Children. For under such a Faith and Religion,

ligion, *Envy*, *Wrath*, *Malice*, *Persecution*, *Pride*, *Passion*, *Covetousness*, *Worldly-mindedness*, &c. may and do prevail; yea, and are *Cloaked*, as with a secure Cover from the Stroak of God's Spirit; insomuch, as when any are moved of the Lord to *Decry* such Fair and Hypocritical Shews of Religion, they are reputed *Rash* and *Censorious*, and presently a Plea must be made on this wise; *Do not we follow the Commands of the Scripture? Did not such and such do so and so?* Which at best are but the Duties of Sacrifice, and not of Obedience: Never regarding from what Ground the Performance springs, whether it be according to the Rule of the **New** or of the **Old Creature**: But abuse and vilifie us for making such Distinctions; as if the Prayers, Preachings, Singings, outward Baptizings and Suppings, *&c.* of Men in their *own unsanctified Spirits*, *Strength and Will* were required and accepted of God for *Evangelical* Worship. Thick Darkness, and a Dangerous Presumption! Thus are Men *Out of the Way* concerning both *Faith* and *Practice*, and the true *Rule* and *Judge* of Them. They make the former, *viz. Faith* and *Practice*, to lie in an *Assent* of the Understanding to such Propositions, and in an *Imitation* of former Observations, that were at best but *Signs* of good things to come, and the Duties of *Sacrifice* (which is far from the *Immanuel-State*) And the latter, *viz.* the *Rule* and *Judge* to be the *Scriptures*; which is but an Account of those

Things

Things that others were Ruled to, and Directed in by the *Holy Spirit*, before they were ever recorded or made Scripture; and no other Rule or Judge can so Regulate. For as the *Faith* and *Experience*, so the *Rule* and *Judge* of that Faith and that Experience must be *One*. God by his Spirit begets Faith; God by his Spirit rules Faith, and governs the Life of his Children; *for as many as are Children of God are led by the Spirit of God.* The Scripture, much of it, is but a *Declaration* of Faith and Experience; therefore not *The Rule*, or Judge: For as Faith and Experience were *before* Scripture, so the Rule and Judge were *before* Scripture; because, as I said before, there must be a Rule and Judge where there is Faith; therefore the Scripture is not *That* Rule or Judge: And before that Declaration be answered or fulfilled by any, they must come to the *Faith*, *Rule* and *Judge*, of which *That* is a Declaration: So that Faith *is yielding up to the Requirings of God's Spirit in us, in full Assurance of the Remission of Sins that are past, through the Son of his Love and Life Everlasting*; from whence daily flows Works of *Holiness* well-pleasing to God; which is more than a meer *Assent* of the Understanding to a verbal, though a true Proposition. Again; The Life of a true Christian stands not in *Bodily Exercise*, which says the Apostle profits little: Nor in an *Imitation* of the Ancients in *Temporary* and *Shadowy* Things, which the Hypocrite as well as the Saint can

Rom. 8. 14.

can do; *But in Self-denial and walking in the Spirit, to bring forth the Fruits thereof unto all Godliness*, which is the pure and spiritual Obedience, resulting from the Living Spiritual Faith of God's Elect, and the Rule and Judge thereof, is their *Author* and *Begetter*, even the **Spirit of Truth**, which alone gives saving Understanding, *Faith* and *Obedience*, and searcheth the deep things of God. 1 Tim. 4. 8. Col. 2. 20, 21, 22, 23. Mat. 10. 3. Gal. 5. 16, 23, 25.

O you *Professors* of Religion, that you would but seriously weigh these things, and examine your selves in God's Sight (for he respects none for their *Fair Outside*) if this *Saving* Faith be *your* Faith, and this *Heavenly* Life be *your* Life, and if the *Holy Spirit be your Ruler and Leader*? If not, you are but *Legal*, *Formal*, and in the *Oldness* of the Letter, and Will-worshipers, which obtains not with God: In which State, not the Wisdom from above, but that which is from *below*, of the *Old Creature*, is your Rule: In it you read Scripture, Expound it, Pray, Preach, Sing and Perform all your Duties; and this is not to walk *according to the Rule of the* **New Creature**; but in a *Legal Spirit* to make a Gospel-Profession, the End of which, from the Lord, I am to tell you, *will be a Bed of Sorrow*. Therefore Resist not the Light and Spirit within, but turn at the Reproof thereof, that you may come to walk in the Way of Life, *Daily Life* to your Souls, that so you may be quickned and made alive to God in all your Gal. 6. 16. Prov. 6. 23.

Duties, and live to him while you live i
that Life, which is hid with Christ in Go
that being *thus* Born again, and become
newed in your inward Man, you may p
form that Pure and Spiritual Worship, whi
is of a *sweet Savour* with the Lord; so th
he Bless you with his Heavenly Blessing
and daily Replenish your Souls with the u
speakable Joys of his Love and Salvatio
This I heartily desire, and through all Di
culties Incessantly Travel for, in Body, Soul a
Spirit, that the All-wise, Good, Omnipote
God may be Known, Served and Obey
by you, to your Comfort, and his Eter
Honour, who alone is worthy to receive
now and for ever, *Amen.*

William Pe

FINIS.

Postscript.

I Would not be misunderstood in what I have writ of the Excellency and Preference of the Holy Spirit of God, as the first, chief and general Rule of Life and Practice, and as the infallible, and therefore the best Judge of Controversy among *Christians*; as if I thereby intended to lessen or undervalue the divine Authority, or Service, of the blessed Scriptures of Truth, since we most heartily believe them to have been given forth from the same Holy Spirit, and are a Declaration of the Mind and Will of God; and, as such, are obliging upon all that have, and can have them, both in reference to Faith and Practice: And we utterly disclaim and renounce all Doctrines and Practices repugnant to them.

But as the holy Spirit gave them forth through Holy Men, so without the Help of the Holy Spirit, they cannot be truly and spiritually understood, by those that read them, for their Edification and Comfort; for that which writ them can best apply them: Which is the Reason of that Preference we give to the Spirit of God, and of our pressing People to take diligent Heed to the Manifestation of it, that they may read, pray, praise, preach and live in the Spirit, to God's Glory and their eternal Comfort.

W. P.